



Bitterroot National Forest

1801 N. 1st Street, Hamilton, MT 59840 (406) 363-7100

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Contact: Bitterroot National Forest
(406) 363-7100**

High Fire Danger Prompts Stage 1 Fire Restrictions for Ravalli County

Hamilton, Montana, July 11, 2007 — Due to the continued hot, dry weather conditions throughout Ravalli County and the increase in fire activity, beginning Saturday, 12:01 a.m. July 14, Stage 1 Fire Restrictions will be in effect throughout Ravalli County and the Bitterroot National Forest. The purpose of these restrictions is to provide for public safety and resource protection during times of high fire danger. The restrictions apply to campfires and outdoor smoking on state, federal, and private lands outside the city limits, regardless of land ownership.

Campfires and the use of charcoal briquettes will only be allowed in designated recreation sites or campgrounds and only in metal fire rings or metal grills provided at the site. Fires in rock fire rings are not permitted. Campfires are allowed on private property for the purposes of cooking, as long as the landowner manages the campfire in a prudent and reasonable manner. In addition to the campfire restrictions, **smoking is permitted** only inside buildings, vehicles, developed recreation sites, or within three foot diameter areas cleared of burnable vegetation. Although **firewood cutting is not prohibited** in State I Fire Restrictions, please limit your firewood cutting and chainsaw use to morning hours.

On the Bitterroot National Forest, campfires are allowed where posted **Designated Campfire Area** – campfires or charcoal briquettes are only allowed in agency provided metal fire rings or metal grills. The Designated Campfire Area sites are:

- **Stevensville:** Charles Waters Campground, Larry Creek Group Site, Gold Creek Campground, Blodgett Creek Campground,
- **Darby:** Black Bear Campground, Schumaker Campground, Lake Como Recreation area (Upper Como Campground, picnic sites, Lower Campground, Rock Creek Campground)
- **Sula:** Martin Creek Campground, Jennings Campground, Indian Trees Campground, Spring Gulch Campground, Warm Springs Campground, Crazy Creek Horse Camp, Crazy Creek Campground, East Fork Guard Station

- **West Fork** (Montana, outside wilderness): Sam Billings Memorial Campground, Rombo Campground, Slate Creek Campground, Alta Campground, Fales Flat Group Area

Similar restrictions will be enforced on many other public and private lands in west central Montana. Please contact the local agency officials for current restrictions in other areas.

Stage I Fire Restrictions will remain in effect until the fire danger significantly decreases. The following are exempt from the restrictions:

- Persons with a permit specifically authorizing the otherwise prohibited act.
- Persons using a stove solely fueled by petroleum or LPG fuels that can be turned on and off.
- Persons conducting activities in those designated areas where the activity is specifically authorized by written posted notice.
- Any Federal, State, or local officer or member of an organized rescue or fire fighting force in the performance of an official duty.

Violators of the Stage I Fire Restrictions may face prosecution, including a \$5000 fine and up to six months in jail. For more information on the restrictions on federal land call the Bitterroot National Forest at (406) 363-7100. Ron Nicholas, Ravalli County Office of Emergency Management Coordinator, may be contacted at (406) 375-6655 with any questions concerning restrictions on private lands in the county. If you have questions concerning restrictions on state owned lands, please call the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation office in Missoula at (406) 542-4200.